**Spring 2016**

**Annual Program Review Update**

**Language Arts Division**

**Dean’s Summary**

**Description of Division**

The Language Arts Division is comprised of the Departments of English, English as a Second Language (ESL), Journalism, Reading, and Speech/Communication. The English Department offers courses in English Writing (EWRT) and Literature (ELIT). LART courses, which combine basic skills English and Reading curriculum into a learning community, are also housed in the Division. In addition, the Language Arts Division coordinates, supports, and maintains two computer labs that serve the entire Language Arts Division, and a third computer lab dedicated to the Journalism Program and *La Voz*, the student and college newspaper.

**Enrollment Trends**

Key Enrollment Data:

* 2014-15 total enrollment: 31,064
* Three-year growth: 4.3%
* Targeted group success: 74%
* Non-target group success: 83%
* Overall success: 80%

The demand for Language Arts Division courses remains strong, having grown 4.3% over three years for a total enrollment over 31,000. This growth was achieved while maintaining FTEF at a steady level, resulting in a 3% increase in productivity over the three-year period.

Enrollments grew in nearly all departments. Over the most recent one-year period, ELIT enrollments were down slightly, but combined with EWRT, English grew by 4.3%. Speech also had a marginal decline of 1%; however, WSCH was unchanged and productivity increased 0.9%. Like English, ESL increased by 4.8%. Journalism enrollment grew by 2.6%. Reading enrollment appeared to grow by a remarkable 25% over the period, due in part to the transfer of LART enrollment into Reading beginning in 2014-15.

**Student Success and Equity**

Target populations grew at a faster rate than non-targeted populations in most Language Arts Division programs. Target populations are growing at a faster rate in the basic skills, and target populations comprise a significantly larger portion of the overall enrollment in basic skills classes compared to transfer level courses. This is most readily apparent when comparing the distribution by ethnicity in Reading classes, in which all enrollment is basic skills, to that of Speech or ELIT. In Reading, Latino/a students are the largest demographic group, at 37%, ahead of Asian (35%) and white (10%). In Speech, Asian students are the largest group (39%), followed by Latino/a (27%) and white (18%). Likewise, in ELIT, Asian students are the largest group (35%), again followed by Latino/a (27%) and white (23%). As these numbers show, Latino/a students are disproportionately over-represented in basic skills classes. Once they reach transfer level, their numbers are more in line with the general college distributions. The trend appears to be consistent in all basic skills courses, although the enrollment data for basic skills courses in English Writing (EWRT) is not disaggregated from the transfer level.

As the Latino/a population grows across the campus, the importance of closing the overall equity gap, and in particular the basic skills equity gap, cannot be overstated. The changing demographics present a clear case for greater investment in basic skills courses and support.

The percent of successful grades among targeted populations for the whole of the Language Arts Division was remarkably consistent during the three-year period from 2012-13 through 2014-15, (74% to 73% to 74%), even as enrollment of targeted populations surged by 10% over the same period. Non-targeted populations saw similarly consistent success rates (82% to 82% to 83%), with enrollment growing by a nominal 1.6%. While it is important to note that the faster growth in targeted populations did not adversely affect the equity gap, it is equally important to recognize that the disproportionately larger number of Latino/a students in basic skills classes calls for a renewed and intensified effort in order to make progress in closing the gap.

Success rates of targeted populations in individual departments were steady or improved. In Speech, the success rate for targeted populations rose from 76% to 80% between 2012-13 and 2014-15. In Reading, success rates for targeted populations held steady (73%). In ELIT, success rates rose from 69% to 73%, and in EWRT, the rate held steady at 72%. Likewise, the gap between targeted populations and non-targeted populations remained steady or closed over the three-year period in all departments in Language Arts.

All departments have engaged in program level activities aimed at reducing the equity gap, and these efforts are ongoing. Some of the activities include department retreats, workshops, a division retreat, and department meetings, all of which were focused entirely or primarily on equity. New programs such as Jumpstart, a new summer bridge program; REACH, an athletics cohort; new LinC cohorts, such as Biology/EWRT; and new hybrid courses in ESL; along with ongoing programs such as Partners in Learning, the Caroline Keen Essay Contest, and IMPACT AAPI; are just a few of the many efforts that Language Arts faculty and staff are pursuing with the goal of closing the equity gap.

Because of the correlation between the growth in target populations and the demand for basic skills courses, closing the equity gap at the basic skills level will have a significant impact on the equity gap in other programs. The soon to be hired Language Arts Division Basic Skills Counselor is an important step in supporting students in basic skills classes and is expected to positively impact our equity numbers. Current work being done in college-wide committees including DARE, SSSP, and the EAC presents an alignment of approaches and efforts that has the potential to close the equity gap across many disciplines. English and Reading faculty are heavily involved in the development of the Jumpstart program, which will run this summer for the first time. Similarly, greater coordination between and among Language Arts Division instructional programs, Student Success & Retention Services, the Student Success Center, Learning in Communities, Counseling, and other support programs is vital to our equity efforts.

**SLO/PLO Assessment**

All departments in the Language Arts Division have made progress assessing SLOs and PLOs. Along with equity planning and assessment, SLOs and PLOs and assessment results have been and will continue to be the focus of department and division meetings.

**Staff and Faculty Levels**

Full-time faculty replacement and growth positions continue to be a central concern in the program reviews in the Language Arts Division. Overall, FT % and PT% both declined between 2012-13 and 2014-15, while overload has increased. All departments have hired multiple part-time faculty each year, but have been unable to keep up with the demand. This has resulted in a greater reliance on full-time faculty overloads in order to cover classes. The difficulty in recruiting, training, and retaining highly qualified part-time faculty places a greater burden on full-time faculty. The diversity of the faculty in departments is also a concern, particularly as our student population demographics evolve. Our goal of recruiting and retaining a diverse and engaged faculty is made more challenging by the local cost of living. Staff and faculty are forced to choose between high housing costs and rising rents or commuting great distances. Full-time faculty searches currently underway will, if successful, help to ameliorate the demand, but additional full-time positions in Speech, English, and ESL remain a crucial and ongoing need.

Reductions in staffing in Language Arts also remain a concern. Staffing shortages have necessitated closing the Division Office during regular hours on occasion, and we are no longer able to provide evening support for the labs. The lack of evening lab hours has a disproportionate impact on non-traditional and working students, an impact which is magnified when combined with the loss of other evening support for students, such as tutoring.

**Equipment and Facilities**

Improved use of technology-enhanced instruction, whether in a traditional face-to-face class, a hybrid class, or a fully online class, is vital to the success of our programs and our students. Replacing/upgrading existing equipment in classrooms and labs and adding state-of-the-art equipment will help us keep pace with social change and assure our students and graduates are well prepared to succeed in employment or after transfer. Much of our multimedia equipment is more than five years old and is not industry standard. A short list of the most pressing and most crucial equipment/facilities requests follows:

* Replacement of the majority of chalkboards in the L-Quad with white boards to reduce dust allergens and protect computers and multimedia equipment
* Dual light switches in L-Quad classrooms to allow some lights to be turned off and reduce ambient light while the projector is in use (English, ESL, Reading)
* Upgraded and/or refreshed furniture, including tables and chairs in L-Quad classrooms—removing broken chairs and tables and replacing missing and broken furniture is crucial; current reliance on folding chairs make effective collaboration difficult (Speech)
* Sound baffling to reduce sound spillover in L4 classrooms—student presentations as well as general instruction and collaborative work need limited distractions and disruptions (Speech)
* Clickers for classroom use to allow low-stakes quizzes to help instructors assess understanding the stress of graded activities
* Additional electrical outlets in classrooms to support students bringing multiple devices
* Storage cabinet to secure cameras and other mobile equipment used by students in the Journalism program

**Other Budget Needs**

B-Budget augmentation is needed for staff and faculty development, for equity work, and for better alignment of courses and norming standards. Stipends are needed to encourage part-time faculty to attend department/division retreats, and to meet division/department equity objectives.

Increased part-time faculty inclusion in department, division, and college-wide initiatives is crucial to our efforts to close the equity gap, diversify the curriculum, and to contribute to the college mission of civic engagement and social justice. We cannot achieve our student equity goals without including our part-time faculty at every step along the way. As the Speech Department implements its new hybrid course structure with the additional hour of information literacy, additional stipends will be needed to ensure all faculty are equally capable of delivering the new curriculum and competent in the online environment. Expanding the use of the information literacy materials into other courses and departments will also require stipends for part-time faculty.

An increased budget for printing continues to be a concern across all departments. A disproportionate impact on underserved student populations and students in basic skills courses is of foremost concern. Increasing the budget for developmental courses to allow instructors some flexibility in supporting students who have limited digital access or familiarity.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

Shifting demographics are having an impact on the demand for basic skills courses. At the same time, meeting the needs of a changing student population challenge instructors in all courses to make their classroom more inclusive, and rapid changes in technology and communication add an additional layer of complexity to instruction. Students are often familiar with emerging technology but lack the understanding of how and when to use different tools and applications for academic purposes. Varying degrees of access to technology and digital resources have a disproportionate impact on developmental students and other historically underserved student populations.

Achieving our equity goals will require an increased investment in efforts that provide specific support for students with different levels of access to and experience with instructional technology and other educational resources. Effective efforts have been those that are collaborative and involve a coordinated effort by multiple individuals in different disciplines and departments. Achieving the necessary level of coordination and inclusion requires additional human and financial resources. Faculty and staff need to be supported in the adoption of new and existing technology and in the development of more inclusive pedagogies and teaching methods. Faculty and staff need to be encouraged to participate and collaborate through stipends and other material resources.

Each of these challenges is also an opportunity; there is a clear correlation between the increase in diversity of the students and staff and the opportunity to foster inclusiveness and promote equity in our classes and on our campus.